

Events Leading Up to Jesus' Last Passover

(Sabbath Before Passover)

Fred R. Coulter—April 4, 2020

Greetings, brethren! Welcome to the Sabbath before Passover! This is the first time in ten years that we've had a Passover in the middle of the week.

On rare occasions there's that ten year gap where there are no Passovers in the middle of the week. However, including this year, in the next five years, there will be three Passovers with the Passover in the middle of the week.

We want to look at some of the events leading up to the Passover. We will see that the Passover Sabbath—or the Sabbath before Passover—is the 10th day of Nisan, and is the day that the Passover lamb was to be selected. We will see that Jesus was selected on that Sabbath before the Passover.

Let's begin and we'll do a study covering parts of the last six days leading up to Jesus' last Passover. You can follow through in *A Harmony of the Gospels!*

John 12:1: "Now, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had died, *and* whom He had raised from *the* dead. There they made a supper *for* Him, and Martha served; and Lazarus was one of those who sat with Him" (vs 1-2).

This anointing of Jesus was the first of two. We will see a little later in Matt. 26 that two days before the Passover He was anointed in the house of Simon the leper. So, the account goes on showing:

Verse 3: "Mary then took a pound of pure spikenard ointment worth a great price *and* anointed Jesus' feet, wiping His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the aroma of the ointment."

Then Judas Iscariot brought up a problem of waste, v 5: "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred silver coins, and given to *the* poor?" Now he said this, not because he cared for the poor, **but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and carried what was put in it**" (vs 5-6)—*the incidentals for Christ and the apostles!* He carried the bag for payment for it.

Judas was snitching out of the bag himself, and he wanted to sell the ointment to put the money back in the bag. But Jesus said:

Verse 7_[transcriber's correction]: "...Let her alone; she has been keeping it toward the day of My burial.

For you have the poor with you always..." (vs 7-8).

Outside a crowd was gathering, because just a few days before Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. The people wanted to see Lazarus and Jesus. Even the scribes, Pharisees and priests were wanting to kill not only Jesus, but Lazarus.

Verse 9: "Then a great crowd of the Jews found out that He was there. And they came, not only because of Jesus, but also that they might see Lazarus, whom He had raised from *the* dead. But the chief priests took counsel in order that they might kill Lazarus also" (vs 9-10).

We're going to see that many of the things that were done leading up to the time two days before the Passover, that Jesus brought great confrontation to the religious leaders, the scribe, the elders, the Sadducees, the Pharisees and challenged them. What they did, they made a religion overlapping and coming around all the laws and commandments of Moses. That was basically what is known today as *Judaism!*

Here's why they wanted to kill Lazarus, v 11: "Because by reason of him, many of the Jews were leaving *them* and believing in Jesus."

All of this took place on the 8th of Nisan, and of course, the day begins at sunset. That was the 1st month and the 8th day, Wednesday night. Then Thursday, the day portion we have quite a few things happen here.

Verse 12: "On the next day, a great crowd of *people* who had come for the Feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming into Jerusalem, took branches from palm trees and went out to meet Him, and were shouting, 'Hosanna! Blessed *is* He Who comes in the name of *the* Lord, the King of Israel'" (vs 12-13).

Quite a thing! This was ***not*** Palm Sunday! *Nor was it a Palm Sabbath!* This was a Thursday. Think of this for a minute. If this was happening on the Sabbath, don't you think that the religious authorities would attack the disciples and the people for breaking off branches on the Sabbath and strewing them in the road? *Of course they would have!*

Verse 14: "Now, after finding a young donkey, Jesus sat upon it, exactly as it is written."

Many Scriptures are fulfilled! How are they

being fulfilled exactly the way that should be, by the events that were taking place. I am sure that many of the angels were orchestrating the timing of these events. God was sending them also to inspire the people to come to Jerusalem.

Verse 15: “Fear not, daughter of Sion. Behold, your King comes, sitting on a colt of a donkey.’ And His disciples did not understand these things at the beginning; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him, and that they had done these things to Him. Then the group that was with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb, and raised him from *the* dead, testified of *what they had seen*” (vs 15-17). *So, this was a marvelous thing!*

Verse 18: “Because of this, the people also met Him, for they had heard of this miracle that He had done.” Notice why the Pharisees were wanting to get rid of Jesus and Lazarus.

Verse 19: “Then the Pharisees said among themselves, ‘Do you see that we are not gaining in any way? Look! The world has gone after Him.’”

That’s quite a thing out there. ***They were afraid of losing power!*** Isn’t that true? The establishment: Once it’s established and corrupted, it does not want the truth, where in religion or government. People say they want the truth, but they really don’t want the Truth of God, because that would convict them of their sins.

Matt. 21—here we see the beginning of ***another confrontation*** that Jesus had with the religious authorities. It describes the Pharisees and also the Herodians. This shows where they got the donkey and the colt and brought them to Jesus.

Matthew 21:12: “And Jesus went into the temple of God and cast out all those who were buying and selling in the temple; and He overthrew the tables of the money exchangers, and the seats of those who were selling doves. Then He said to them, ‘It is written, “My house shall be called a house of prayer,” but you have made it a den of thieves”” (vs 12-13).

That’s quite a thing, and that’s exactly how it is in religion today, and exactly how it is in the government today, and how these things are and how they take place.

So, this last week of Jesus was really very powerful. You know that the angels of God were involved, Satan and the demons were involved, and Jesus and the apostles were involved.

Luke 19:41: “And when He came near *and* saw the city, He wept over it, saying, ‘If you had

known, even you, at least in this your day, the things for your peace; **but now they are hidden from your eyes**” (vs 41-42).

The spiritual blindness does not equal physical blindness. Spiritual blindness is that ***they can’t see the Truth and they can’t understand the Truth***. As Jesus said, ‘The blind are leading the blind and they will both fall into the ditch.

Verse 43: “For *the* days shall come upon you that your enemies shall cast a rampart about you, and shall enclose you around and keep you in on every side, and shall level you to the ground...” (vs 43-44). He’s talking about the city of Jerusalem, absolutely true, that happened.

“...and your children within you; and they shall not leave in you a stone upon a stone, because you did not know the season of your visitation.’ Then He went into the temple *and* began to cast out those who were selling and those who were buying in it, saying to them, ‘It is written, “My house is a house of prayer”...”” (vs 44-46).

Now let’s see what He did in the account of Mark; this becomes quite an important thing here.

Sidebar: when first studying out the last ten days of Jesus’ life, that led to understanding that only in Mark did the cursing of the fig tree cover a two-day period. I had two chronologies, that in my first Passover season in 1965 in Boise, Idaho, I wanted to do the last ten days of Jesus’ life.

I had notes from Dr. Herman Hoeh and Dale Hampton. I was using those as a guide for what I was to bring. I found out that they were off, and I couldn’t figure out where it was. So, I took a piece of paper and marked Matthew at the top and took other pieces of paper and had Mark, Luke and John.

I started the last six days before the Passover and went through everything and wrote down all of the Scriptures, which years later became incorporated into *A Harmony of the Gospels, The Last Ten Days of Jesus’ Life*.

Here in Mark 11 we find that the cursing of the fig tree occurred over ***a two-day period***. When you look at the account in Matthew and Luke it looks like it’s the same day, but it’s not.

Mark 11:11: “And Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and *because* the hour was already late, after looking around at everything *there*, He went out to Bethany with the twelve. And in the morning, after they left Bethany, He became hungry. Then, seeing a fig tree afar off that had leaves, He went *to it to see* if He might possibly find

something on it. But after coming to it, He found nothing except leaves because it was not yet *the* season for figs. And Jesus responded *by* saying to it, 'Let no one eat fruit from you any more forever!' And His disciples heard *it*' (vs 11-14).\

Quite an interesting thing. They didn't know the season of the time of Jesus Christ. This fig tree pictures the way of Judaism. It didn't bring forth any fruit. Why? *Because the traditions of Judaism overlaid everything of the Scripture and blinded the people!*

Verse 15: "Then they came into Jerusalem; and after entering the temple, Jesus began to cast out those who were buying and selling in the temple; and He overthrew the tables of the money exchangers and the seats of those who were selling doves. Moreover, He did not allow anyone to carry a vessel through the temple. And He taught, saying to them, 'Is it not written, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations"? But you have made it a den of robbers.' Now, the chief priests and the scribes heard *this*, and they sought how they might destroy Him; for they feared Him, because all the multitudes marveled at His teaching. And **when evening came, He went out of the city**" (vs 15-19).

- cursed the fig tree
- went into the temple
- did the teaching
- casting out all of the animals
- overthrowing the tables
- castigating the chief priest, scribes and Pharisees

Then when it was evening He went out and back to the Mt. of Olives!

Verse 29: "And **in the morning...**" *It was cursed one day; they went into the temple. They left and went out of the city and in the morning:*

"...as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from *the roots*" (v 20). *So, it was in the morning, day two!*

Verse 21: "Then Peter remembered *and* said to Him, 'Look, Master! The fig tree that You cursed has dried up.' And Jesus answered and said to them, **'Have faith from God'**" (vs 21-22).

This is an interesting statement because in the Greek it means *have the faith of God*, which means that faith comes from God. We know that in the New Testament it's one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. This also is what it talks about in Gal. 2, but ***through the righteousness of the faith of Jesus are we justified!*** This is a gift of God.

There's always a certain amount of faith that

people can have, because people believe things. But to have ***a spiritual conviction of faith, that must come from God and His Spirit***, not from within us.

Verse 23: "For truly I say to you, whoever shall say to this mountain, 'Be taken away and be cast into the sea,' and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he said will take place, he shall have whatever he shall say."

There's one caveat that Jesus gave in the model prayer: ***the will of God! If it is the will of God!*** It's not that people will go around and start casting out mountains and hills and all of that sort of thing. ***But something that is harder than that to do is to convert the human mind!*** That takes the faith of Jesus Christ.

Verse 24: "For this reason I say to you, all *the* things that you ask *when* you are praying, believe that you will receive *them*, and *they* shall be *given* to you."

That's a wonderful thing to understand. Look back at your life, according to the will of God the things that you have asked for, God has answered and given. Maybe not necessarily in the same measure that you might necessarily have particularly wanted, but nevertheless, ***God answers those prayers!***

There will even come a time when there will be something happen that you thought of, kind of in a glancing thought, but didn't think too much about it, and sometime later you look and back and say, ***'God answered that thought!'***

Eph. 3—this is the kind of faith that we are to have, which comes from God. He's not going to give us miracles to do so that we can show off. There has to be a purpose for everything that we ask for, according to the will of God. ***But notice this promise:***

Ephesians 3:20: "Now, to Him Who is able to do exceeding abundantly..." ***That's also referring to the time of the resurrection and the time when we will be in the Kingdom of God with the fullness of God!***

"...**above all that we ask or think**, according to the power that is working in us" (v 20). *So, when Jesus said, "...**Have faith from God**"—or of God—that's what He meant!*

Here's another important principle that He was teaching to His apostles just before He was getting ready to be crucified:

Mark 11:25: "But when you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, **forgive...**" *It says in another place, 'work it out with the one with*

whom you have a difficulty!'

"...so that your Father Who is in heaven may forgive you your offenses" (v 25). *That's a very important thing to understand! The world likes to remember and hate! God wants:*

- love
- repentance
- mercy
- reconciliation
- forgiveness
- that's the whole story of the New Testament
- that's the whole purpose as why Christ came

Verse 26: **"For if you do not forgive, neither will your Father Who is in heaven forgive you your offenses."**

Verse 27: "Then they came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to Him; and they said to Him, **'By what authority are You doing these things?....'**" (vs 27-28).

You have to have *authority* to come into the Temple of God. Thing about what He was doing:

- casting out the animals
- casting out the moneychangers
- overturning the tables
- teaching the people

They wanted to know *what authority*, because Jesus didn't get it from the high priest or the elders. Who did He get it from? "...And who gave You this authority, that You do these things?"

Verse 29: "Then Jesus answered and said to them, 'I also will ask you one thing, and **if you answer Me**, I will also tell you by what authority I do these things.'"

Good lesson: sometimes it's best to answer with a question. Why did He do it this way? *Because He knew their hearts!* He knew that they were after Him.

Verse 30: "'The baptism of John, was it from heaven or from men? Answer Me.' And **they reasoned among themselves**, saying, 'If we say, "From heaven," He will say, "Why then did you not believe him?" But if we say, "From men"; they feared the people, because everyone held that John was indeed a prophet. And they answered Jesus by saying, 'We do not know.'....'" (vs 30-33). *That was an outright lie! They knew it was from God!*

"...Then Jesus answered *and* said to them, 'Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these

things'" (v 33). *Quite amazing, indeed, some of the confrontations that are coming along!*

The timeframe that we have is the 10th day of the 1st month, John 12, and this will be very interesting indeed! This is quite a chapter covering many things. This is why we have the four Gospels, to put it all together so that we make sure that we have everything and all the facts that we need.

John 12:20: "Now there were certain Greeks among those who had come up to worship at the Feast. And these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee; and they asked him, saying, 'Sir, we desire to see Jesus.' Philip came and told Andrew, and Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus. But Jesus answered them, saying, 'The time has come for the Son of man to be glorified'" (vs 20-23). *Remember, this on the 10th day of the 1st month!*

That's today, the Sabbath before the Passover. But the sequence was a little different and was actually a week later in the year that Jesus went through these things. But for us, the 10th day of the 1st month is this Sabbath, the Sabbath before the Passover. The 14th day of the 1st month.

Jesus continued, v 24: "Truly, truly I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."

Jesus is giving some good parables and teachings here. Then He makes it absolutely clear. I want you to tie in the next couple of verses in John 12 together with:

John 14:6 where Jesus said: "...I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through Me."

- What are we to do in our lives?
- What are we to do with our own human nature?
- What is conversion is all about?

John 12:25: "The one who loves his life shall lose it, and the one who hates his life in this world shall keep it unto eternal life. **If anyone will serve Me, let him follow Me...**" (vs 25-26).

Then we have about counting the cost (Luke 14); that **we have to have complete dedication to God the Father and Jesus Christ!**

- not to men
- not to an organization

But to God the Father and Jesus Christ, and our conversion grows deeper and deeper with the Spirit of God as we grow in grace and knowledge! 'That's

a tremendous thing for us, brethren! Think about that!

God the Father Who rules the universe, the great Sovereign of the universe, and His only begotten Son Jesus Christ:

- our High Priest
- Head of the Church
 - ✓ They love us
 - ✓ They have called us

They have all of this that we're reading about all worked out so that Jesus would become the perfect sacrifice for the sin of the world That covers all the sins of the world, because the sin of the world is what Adam and Eve did; ***they didn't obey the voice of God!*** Then human nature, with the judgment of God, became hostile against God.

Only true repentance, true baptism and true conversion can change that! ***That's by and through the love and power and will of God!***

Verse 27 is where Jesus was chosen by the Father on the 10th day of the 1st month, the Sabbath before Passover:

Verse 27: “Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour? But for this *very* purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify Your name.’ Then a voice came from heaven, *saying*, **‘I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.’**” (vs 27-28).

These are the very words that are at the beginning of the prayer in John 17. Let's read that so we see how it all comes together. That is talking about the crucifixion, and this was the 10th day of the 1st month when Jesus was chosen as the Lamb of God.

Here in Jesus' final prayer before He was arrested He spoke these words:

John 17:1: “Jesus spoke these words, and lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, ‘Father, the hour has come... [down to the hour] ...glorify Your own Son, so that Your Son may also glorify You’—*talking about the crucifixion*, and that's what it's talking about in John 12 about glorifying God. ***He was selected!***

Verse 2: “Since You have given Him authority over all flesh, in order that He may give eternal life to all whom You have given Him. For this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom You did send” (vs 2-3).

Jesus had not yet received His Godship back; not until after the resurrection. That's why at

that time the Father was the only true God. Jesus could not be 100% man and 100% God; that's an impossibility.

Verse 4: “I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work that You gave Me to do. and now, Father, glorify Me with Your own self, with the glory that I had with You before the world existed” (vs 4-5).

Quite a prayer! Absolutely marvelous! That comes all the way down to us, because Jesus prayed for us as well. Those are things we need to keep in mind as we come to the Passover:

- as we're preparing
- as we're thinking about the foot-washing
- as we're thinking about the bread and wine

We need to do it exactly as Jesus has said, exactly in the timing that we find in the New Testament!

John 12:29: “Then the people standing *there*, who heard *it*, said, ‘It thundered.’ Others said, ‘An angel spoke to Him.’ Jesus answered and said, ‘This voice did not come because of Me, but because of you’” (vs 29-30)—***so, you would know that God the Father selected Him as the Passover Lamb to take away the sin of the world!***

Notice what else He said, and what this has done, because everything was complete up to this point.

Verse 31: “Now is *the* judgment of this world. Now shall the prince of this world be cast out.”

This had to be done in order to get rid of Satan the devil! Then after the resurrection, his time of judgment has already been given. ***But there has to be:***

- the preaching of the Gospel
- the building of the Church
- the character and conversion of all of those whom God would call

So that with all the rest of the saints the whole of the Kingdom of God can be given to all of the sons and daughters of God at the same time.

- we still live in the world where Satan is active
- we're still subject to overcoming those things

Verse 32: “‘And if I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all to Myself.’ But He said this to signify by what death He was about to die” (vs 32-33).

Quite a powerful thing! He let them know that He was going to die! This confounded the Jews,

because the Jews were expecting the Messiah, and:

If He's the Messiah surely He would come to us and surely He would recognize that we're the ones who are in authority. After all, we have that authority from God.

True! But they misuse the authority! They corrupted it by the schemes of Satan the devil, rather than follow God.

Verse 34: "The people answered Him, 'We have heard out of the law that the Christ lives forever, and why do You say that the Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?'" *So, their spiritual blindness was quite a thing!*

Verse 35: "Then Jesus said to them, 'Yet, a little while the Light is with you. **Walk while you have the Light**, so that *the* darkness will not overtake you. For **the one who walks in darkness does not know where he is going.**'"

That's true statement, prophetic from that time down to this. You can tie that going back to John 3, that those who believe are coming to the Light, and those who do not believe do not come to the Light, because they don't want their evil deeds exposed for what they are. This is quite a prophecy here!

Verse 36: "'While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become *the* children of Light.'..." *Very clear:*

- ***IF*** you do not believe in Jesus Christ as the Light of the world, the Son of God, the only Begotten of the Father
- ***IF*** you do not believe that He is the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world
 - ✓ you have no life in you
 - ✓ you have no forgiveness in you

that's the whole purpose of His

- life
- death
- crucifixion
- resurrection
- the calling of the Church

It's all centered around this!

(go to the next track)

Let's continue on with the last eight days of Jesus' life, leading up to the Passover. Now we come to the 1st day of the week. This is the day of confrontation where Jesus challenges all the religious authorities—the scribes and the Pharisees—with unbelievable sharp and strong language. This was a tremendous witness to them and against them. Instead of repenting, it provoked

them to greater anger and seeking to kill Jesus. *Quite a situation!*

Jesus laid it bare; He laid it out for all to understand.

Mark 12:1: "And He began to speak to them in parables: 'A man planted a vineyard, and put a fence around *it*, and dug a wine vat, and built a tower, and leased it out to husbandmen, and *then* left the country. And at the *harvest* season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, so that he might receive the fruit of the vineyard from the husbandmen. But they took him *and* beat *him*, and sent *him* away empty'" (vs 1-3).

What He's doing is using this parable against them to show that all through the history of Israel, they didn't believe God, and they didn't do what the Law and the Prophets said.

Verse 4: "And in turn, he sent another servant to them; but they stoned him and wounded him on the head, and after insulting *him* sent *him* away. And in turn, he sent still another *servant*, and they killed him; and *he sent* many others, *and* some were beaten and others were killed. Now then, he had yet one son, his own beloved. And so, last of *all* he sent him to them also, saying, 'They will have respect for my son.' But those husbandmen said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours.' And after seizing him, they killed *him* and cast *him* out of the vineyard. Therefore, what will the lord of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the husbandmen and will give the vineyard to others. **Have you not read even this Scripture...**" (vs 4-10).

Think about how many times Jesus said to them, '***Have you not read...***' that's quite a thing, indeed. They put all of their traditions as a fence around the laws, commandment and prophets of God, that if the people kept these traditions they wouldn't break the commandments.

But the problem is that *these traditions were breaking the commandments themselves!* The schemes of men to make the Word of God better never work! ***You've got to do what God says!*** *That's the whole story of human life!* The three words: **obey My voice!**

So, Jesus asked them, v 10: "Have you not read even this Scripture 'The Stone that the builders rejected, this has become *the* head of *the* corner; this was from *the* Lord, and it is wonderful in our eyes'?" (vs 10-11).

Verse 12: "Then they sought to arrest Him, but they feared the multitude; for they knew that He

had spoken the parable against them. And they left Him and went their way. **But...**" (vs 12-13).

They're not done, they want to trip Him into rebelling against Caesar, and rebelling about paying taxes.

"...they sent to Him some of the Pharisees and the Herodians, in order to entrap Him in His words. And after coming to Him, they said, 'Master... [look at how they said this] ...we know that You are true, and *that* You court no man's favor; because You do not look on *the* appearance of men, but You teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not?'" (vs 13-14).

IF what they said, that they believed that He was sent from God, that He taught the Truth, that He wasn't involved in politics like all of the scribes and Pharisees and priests and everything, **WHY** didn't they believe Him?

It's just like we see in many cases in religion and in politics, instead of coming to the truth—which is right in front of them—they continue their own way.

Verse 15: "Should we give *it*, or should we not give *it*?" But perceiving their hypocrisy..."

We'll talk about hypocrisy later on; He really laid it on the line in Matt. 23. He absolutely condemned them in such powerful terminology and convicting guilt against them, that that was the last great confrontation.

"...He said to them, 'Why do you tempt Me? Bring Me a silver coin, so that I may look *at it*.' Then they brought *it*. And He said to them, 'Whose image and superscription *is on* this *coin*?' And they said to Him, 'Caesar's.' And Jesus answered and said to them, 'Render the things of Caesar to Caesar, and the things of God to God.'..." (vs 15-17).

That's talking about more than funds and money; that's talking about everything. Render to God what He has commanded with all your heart and faith, and believe Him!

"...And they were amazed at Him.... [at His answer] ...Then the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him, and they questioned Him, saying, 'Master, Moses wrote for us that if the brother of anyone should die and leave behind a wife, but leave no children, then his brother should take his wife and raise up seed for his brother. *Now*, there were seven brothers; the first took a wife and died, leaving no seed; and the second took her and died, and neither did he leave seed; and the third likewise. And the seven had her and left no seed. Last of all the woman died also'" (vs 18-22). **They**

were trying to trap Him in it!

Verse 23: "Now then, **in the resurrection**, when they shall arise, **to which of them shall she be wife? For all seven had her as wife.**"

Verse 24: "Then Jesus answered them and said, 'In *asking* this, do you not err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God? For when they rise from *the* dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels who *are* in heaven. But concerning the dead, that they do rise, have you not read in the book of Moses about the burning bush, how God spoke to him, saying, "I *am* the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"? He is not the God of *the* dead, but *the* God of *the* living. Therefore, **you err greatly**" (vs 24-27).

Why? ***Because they weren't following God, they were following their own religion!***

Verse 28: "And one of the scribes who had come up *to Him*, after hearing them reasoning together *and* perceiving that He answered them well, asked Him, '**Which is *the* first commandment of all?**'" *We also find this in Deut. 6 and Matt. 22!*

This is the whole basis of any relationship with God! Since God is love and you want the love of God, then you must love God. God doesn't want your part time interest and love in Him, because:

- He wants to give us eternal life
- He wants us to be His sons and daughters in His Kingdom *forever*

Therefore, what He wants of us is complete wholeheartedness of our entire being. That's why we have the Passover.

Verse 29: "Then Jesus answered him, '*The* first of all the commandments *is*, "Hear, O Israel... [put your name there, or Church of God, people of God] ...Our one God is *the* Lord, *the* Lord. And you shall love *the* Lord your God..."'" (vs 29-30).

Notice how all encompassing of everything that we are, and everything that we look forward to becoming. God hasn't called us so that we can be good little citizens in the world. We're to be good citizens in the world, ***true, but He has called us to His sons and daughters in His Kingdom!***

- the stakes are higher
- the goal is greater
- the way to it is more difficult

but then it's also easy when you follow what He says here; notice that in encompasses everything about you:

Verse 30: “And you shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This *is the* first commandment”—*right directly to those and all of those who were listening*, the strict religionists following what they were following, and avoiding the Truth of God laid out from the Word of God by Jesus Christ.

Verse 31: “And *the* second *is* like this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

As recorded in Matt. 22, Jesus said, ‘***On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.***’

The Law and the Prophets *do not support these two commandments. These two commandments support all the Law and the Prophets, because it comes from God first to us, and us back to God!* And to our neighbor and the brethren, and even to our enemies.

That’s the whole purpose of the Passover, ***that we learn this lesson to love God this way, and not let anything become between us and God!***

- *no person*
- *no thing*
- *no idea*
- *no doctrine*
- *no religion*

We need to remember that when we’re taking the foot-washing, the bread and the wine:

- *the solemnity of it*
- *the power of it*
- *the purpose of it*

Verse 32: “Then the scribe said to Him, ‘Right, Master. You have spoken according to Truth that God is one, and there is not another besides Him; and to love Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love *one’s* neighbor as oneself, is more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices’” (vs 32-33).

Verse 34: “And Jesus, seeing that he answered with understanding, said to him, ‘**You are not far from the Kingdom of God.**’

You’re close to it, but it’s one thing to read the Word, it’s another thing to agree that they are true. Yet, it’s a third thing to apply them in our lives. ***That’s the whole purpose of Christianity! The whole purpose of the Passover!***

This day of confrontation kept going, v 35:

“And *while* teaching in the temple, Jesus answered *and* said, ‘How can the scribes say that the Christ is *the* Son of David? For David himself said by the Holy Spirit, “The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.’” Now then, *if* David himself called Him Lord, how can He be his Son?’ And the whole multitude listened to Him eagerly. And He said to them in His teaching...” (vs 35-38).

Here are the scribes, the Pharisees, the Sadducees and all of them:

Jesus said, “...‘Beware of the scribes, who take pleasure in walking around in robes, and in salutations in the marketplaces, and in *the* chief seats in the synagogues and *the* chief places in the feasts; Who devour the houses of widows, and for a pretext make long prayers. These shall receive *the* greater condemnation’” (vs 38-40).

Let’s see the final confrontation that convinced them that ***they must kill Jesus!*** This was so ignominious, so damning and so judgmental of them. Instead of accepting the Truth and repenting they sought the more to kill Him. This is an opportunity and a punishment. An opportunity if they would repent and believe, or a punishment if they felt that they had to continue in the way that they were going.

What was the ultimate penalty? ***They rejected Jesus Christ!*** The temple and the whole system were destroyed ***exactly as Jesus said it would be!*** To this day the Jews—except for a very few—refuse to believe that because of their rejection of Jesus and their sins against God, God had to send them off into dispersion into the whole world, just exactly as He prophesied in Jeremiah!

They didn’t learn the lesson when God destroyed the temple in 539_{B.C.} They didn’t learn that! In every writing of the Jews blames all the enemies. Never do you see anything like we’re going to read in Matt. 23 about their sins and their hypocrisy. Think about it, and you will see that down through history that is true and repeated over and over again.

Matthew 23:8 “But you... [the disciples] ...are not to be called Rabbi; for **one is your Master, the Christ,** and all of you are brethren. Also, do not call *anyone* on the earth your Father; for one is your Father, Who *is* in heaven” (vs 8-9).

Here you have the whole Catholic Church saying that they represent Christ, and that they are the true religion of God. ***They are breaking one of the most simple and easy to understand Scriptures!*** They call their pope—the leader—‘holy’!

Verse 10: “Neither be called Master; for one is your Master, the Christ. But the greatest among you shall be your servant.” (vs 10-11). *That’s what all the elders to do and serve the brethren:*

- to teach the Word of God
- to teach the love of God
- to teach the things in season

Now is the Passover season and time to really understand, again, *the greatness of the love and mercy of God and His sacrifice, and how Christ willingly laid down His life, and what He did to become that sacrifice!* So that it sinks deep into our heart, mind and being, and becomes a very part of our spiritual nature.

Verse 12: “And whoever will exalt himself shall be humbled; and whoever will humble himself shall be exalted.” *If you exalt yourself under the mighty hand of God, and He will exalt you in due time at the resurrection!*

Verse 13: But **woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!**... [double-minded; sanctimonious pretenders] ...For you devour widows’ houses, and as a pretext you offer prayers of great length. Because of this, you shall receive *the greater judgment.*”

Did they not receive the greater judgment? Yes, indeed!

Verse 14: **Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!** For you shut up the Kingdom of Heaven before men; for neither do you yourselves enter, nor do you allow those who are entering to enter.”

You have all of your traditions that you place as more important than what God has commanded! So, Jesus is really bringing the confrontation in full power, because *He knows that this is going to seal their decision to crucify Him!*

Verse 15: “**Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!** For you travel the sea and the land to make one proselyte, and when he has become one, you make him twofold more a son of Gehenna than yourselves.”

Think about that for a minute! What is He saying? *If you keep doing what you’re doing, you’re destined for Gehenna fire!*

Verse 16: “**Woe to you, blind guides,** who say, ‘Whoever shall swear by the temple, it is not binding; but whoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is obligated *to fulfill* his oath.’ **You fools and blind!**...” (vs 16-17). *Morons! Idiots!* (Greek: ‘idiotes’)

“...For which is greater, the gold, or the temple, which sanctifies the gold? And *you say*, ‘Whoever shall swear by the altar, it is not binding; but whoever shall swear by the gift that *is* upon it, he is obligated *to fulfill* his oath.’ **You fools and blind!** For which is greater, the gift, or the altar, which sanctifies the gift? Therefore, the one who swears by the altar swears by it, and by all things that *are* upon it. And the one who swears by the temple swears by it, and by Him Who dwells in it. And the one who swears by heaven swears by the Throne of God, and by Him Who sits upon it” (vs 17-22).

Verse 23: “**Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!** For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, but you have abandoned the more important *matters* of the law—judgment, and mercy and faith....”—*the love of God* (Luke 11) *they have abandoned it!* How did they abandon it? *By placing their traditions as supreme!*

“...**These you were obligated to do, and not to leave the others undone**” (v 23).

This condemnation is absolutely something! It made them vehemently angry so that they would crucify Him.

Verse 24: “**Blind guides,** who filter out a gnat, but swallow a camel! **Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!** For you cleanse the outside of the cup and the dish, but **within you are full of extortion and excess**” (vs 24-25).

We can learn some lessons here, v 26: “**Blind Pharisees!** First **cleanse the inside** of the cup and the dish, so that the outside may also become clean.”

That’s the whole purpose of Passover and Unleavened Bread: **conversion of the heart and mind, with the washing of the Word of God and His Holy Spirit!** The writing of the Word of God in our heart and mind so that we can love God with all our heart, mind, soul, strength and being. That’s the whole purpose of it. Jesus was tell them to take care of the inside: **your heart, mind, thoughts!**

Verse 27: “**Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!** For you are like whited sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful *on the outside*, but within are full of the bones of the dead, and of all uncleanness. Likewise, you also outwardly appear to men *to be* righteous, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness” (vs 27-28).

Isn’t that a tremendous truth of all religionists and politicians, because they were religious and politicians.

Look at how bad the policies of the

politicians are in America today. Look at what they have done in lying, hypocrisy, hatefulness; the media and all who are against law and order and truth! No society can be run by lawlessness. Nothing can exist or get done.

Same way with the Church. You can't have Christianity without the laws and commandments of God, because those are things that God wants us to do. Those are the works that God wants us to walk in and to do.

To say the Law has been done away makes all the Protestants lying hypocrites, just like the scribes and Pharisees. ***It hasn't been done away!***

Verse 29: **Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!** For you build the sepulchers of the prophets, and adorn the tombs of the righteous; and you say, 'If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets'" (vs 29-30).

But they're about ready to partake of the blood of Jesus Christ!

Verse 31: "So then, you are testifying against yourselves, that you are the sons of those who killed the prophets, and *as for* you, you are filling up the measure of your fathers" (vs 31-32).

Notice how this continues; this is a heave lambaste to confront them for coming to arrest and crucify Him. They in their own minds will think that they are doing service to God.

Verse 33: "**You serpents, you offspring of vipers,** how shall you escape the judgment of Gehenna? Because of this, behold, I send to you prophets and wise *men* and scribes; and *some* of them you shall kill and crucify, and *some* of them you shall scourge in your synagogues, and *some of them* you shall persecute from city to city; so that **upon you** may come all *the* righteous blood poured out upon the earth, from the blood of Abel the righteous, unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. **Truly I say to you, all these things shall come upon this generation**" (vs 33-36).

- Did that happen? *Yes, it did!*
- Are the words of God true? *Yes, they are!*

This is why God wants us to understand the great sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and to understand the deep meaning of the Passover.

As we prepare for the Passover this coming Tuesday night, let's keep all these things in mind!

Verse 37—here's how Jesus felt about it: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *you* who kill the prophets

and stone those who have been sent to you, how often would I have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathers her brood under *her* wings, **but you refused!** Behold, your house is left to you desolate. For I say to you, you shall not see Me at all from this time forward, until you shall say, '**Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord**'" (vs 37-39).

Matthew 26:1: "Now, it came to pass *that* when Jesus had finished all these sayings, He said to His disciples, 'You know that after two days the Passover takes place, and the Son of man is delivered up to be crucified.' Then the chief priests and the scribes and the elders of the people assembled together in the court of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas; and *they* took counsel together for the purpose of seizing Jesus by treachery, and killing *Him*. But they said, 'Not during the Feast, so that there will not be a riot among the people.' Now, when Jesus was in Bethany, in Simon the leper's house" (vs 1-6). ***This is a different one, the first anointing was in Lazarus' house!***

Verse 7: "A woman came to Him with an alabaster flask of ointment... [the second anointing] ...very precious, and poured *it* on His head as He sat down *to eat*."

Then Judas went and got the 30 pieces of silver and set out to betray Jesus!

Let's take everything we need to do in preparation for the Passover and understand that we need to examine ourselves (1-Cor. 11). If we examine ourselves and confess our sins, that we do not fall into the judgment of God!

When we come to the Passover at the beginning of the third day, that we will come with an attitude and understanding that we need to have, ***so that we worthily take of the Passover through the worthiness of Christ; not because of our worthiness, but because of:***

- **God's love**
- **God's mercy**
- **God's grace**
- **God's forgiveness**

Have a meaningful, deep and profound Passover!

Scriptural References:

- 1) John 12:1-3, 5-19
- 2) Matthew 21: 12-13
- 3) Luke 19:41-46
- 4) Mark 11:11-24

- 5) Ephesians 3:20
- 6) Mark 11:25-33
- 7) John 12:20-24
- 8) John 14:6
- 9) John 12:25-28
- 10) John 17:1-5
- 11) John 12:29-36
- 12) Mark 12:1-40
- 13) Matthew 23:8-39
- 14) Matthew 26:1-7

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Galatians 2
- Luke 14
- John 3
- Deuteronomy 6
- Matthew 22
- Luke 11
- 1 Corinthians 11

Also referenced: Book: *A Harmony of the Gospels* by
Fred R. Coulter

FRC:bo
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